

# Raising Student Achievement

## A Progress Report from the Virginia Department of Education

### January 2009

**T**he high expectations of the Standards of Learning (SOL), effective accountability and a statewide system of support for public education are creating new opportunities for advanced learning at every grade level. The following performance indicators illustrate the progress Virginia's public schools are making in an era when all students must be challenged to reach their highest potential.

## Virginia Index of Performance

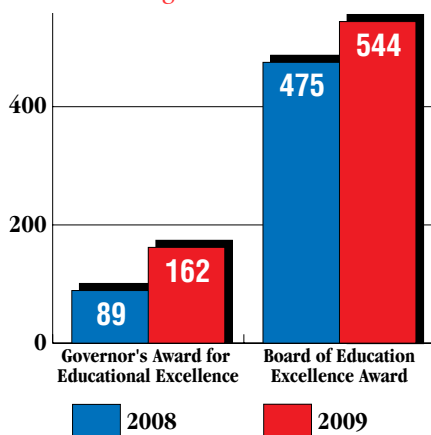
The Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) recognizes advanced achievement and progress toward educational goals that are part of the Board of Education's comprehensive plan for strengthening public education in the commonwealth.

Schools earning VIP awards for excellence from the Governor and Board of Education consistently exceed state and federal achievement standards while expanding access to advanced learning opportunities.

*"The schools earning VIP awards include urban schools, schools in economically challenged rural areas and schools serving diverse communities with high percentages of English-language learners."*

Patricia I. Wright  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

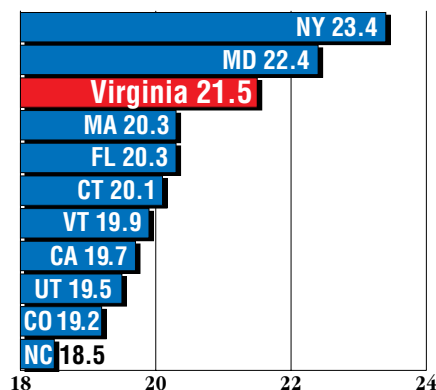
### Schools Earning VIP Excellence Awards



## Advanced Placement

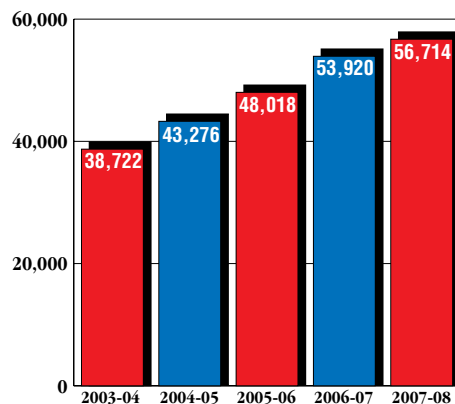
Virginia now boasts the nation's third-highest percentage of high school seniors earning a grade of three or better on Advanced Placement (AP) examinations.

### Advanced Placement: Percent of Students Earning Grade 3 or Higher



The number of Virginia public school students who took at least one AP test increased by 8.8 percent, from 49,834 in 2007 to 54,219 in 2008. The number of examinations taken by public school students in Virginia earning a score of three or higher increased by 5.2 percent, from 53,920 in 2007 to 56,714.

### Number of AP Exams with Grades of 3, 4, or 5



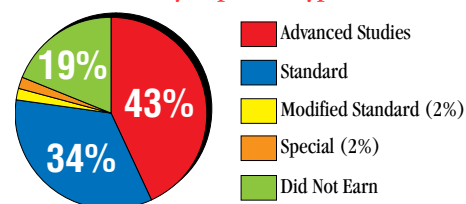
*"The increase in the percentage of students — especially minority students — taking AP courses shows that high schools are responding to the Board of Education's goal of increasing enrollment in college-level courses to at least 25 percent."*

Mark E. Emblidge  
President, Board of Education

## Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate

Accurate graduation rates for the commonwealth, school divisions and high schools were calculated for the first time in 2008 using the longitudinal student-data system funded by the General Assembly. Eighty-one percent of the students in the class of 2008 graduated on time with a diploma.

### 2008 Cohort by Diploma Type

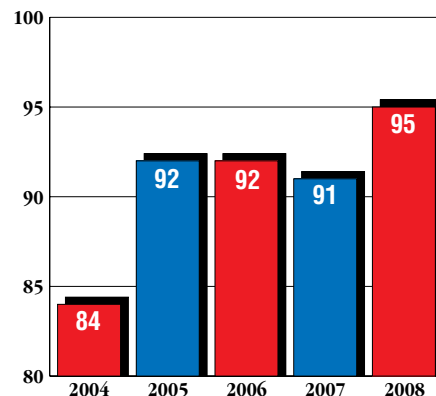


For a fifth consecutive year, the number of Virginia students graduating with an Advanced Studies Diploma increased and the number of advanced diplomas awarded exceeded the number of Standard Diplomas.

## School Accreditation

The percentage of schools meeting Virginia's high standards for learning and achievement is at an all-time high despite significant increases in the rigor of the commonwealth's accountability program.

### Percentage of Fully Accredited Schools



Ninety-five percent of Virginia's public schools are meeting state standards for achievement in English, mathematics, history and science. This is the highest percentage of schools reaching full accreditation since the commonwealth began SOL testing ten years ago.

## Narrowing Achievement Gaps

African-American and Hispanic students continue to narrow achievement gaps with white students on state assessments in reading and mathematics.

- During the last three years, achievement gaps in mathematics have narrowed by four points for black students and two points for Hispanic students even though the performance of white students increased by seven points.
- During the last three years, the achievement gap between black and white students in reading has narrowed by three points, despite a two-point increase in reading for white students. Hispanic students also have narrowed the achievement gap with white students by three points during the last three years.

## Verified Achievement

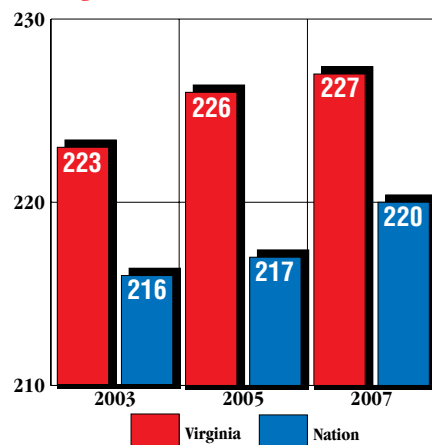
The increase in the achievement of Virginia students in reading and mathematics is confirmed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The commonwealth's students are among the nation's highest achievers in these subjects.

- African-American and Hispanic students in Virginia continue to outperform their peers nationwide in reading and mathematics.
- Virginia leads the nation in grade-4 science achievement. Virginia had the highest achieving girls in science on the 2007 NAEP and the commonwealth's fourth-grade boys came within one point of having the highest average score for males.
- Virginia students also outperform their peers in writing. On the 2007 NAEP writing test, Virginia students scored significantly higher than students in 20 other states and students in only seven states achieved significantly higher average scores.

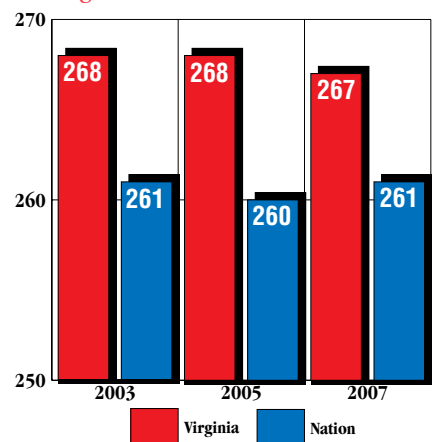
## Career & Technical Education

The number of industry certifications earned by Virginia students through career and technical education (CTE) programs has increased by 66 percent since 2006.

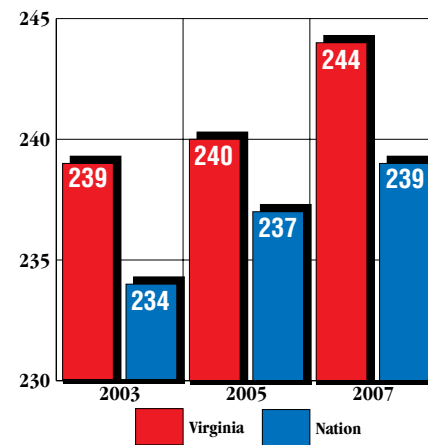
NAEP Average Scale Scores:  
Reading Grade 4



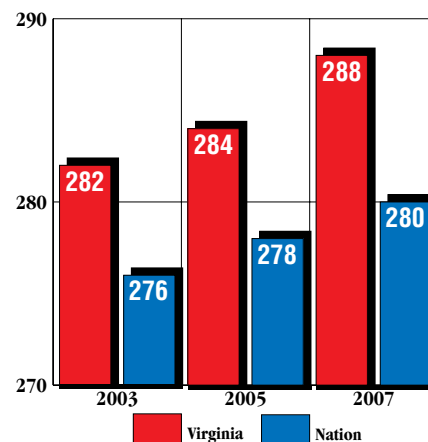
NAEP Average Scale Scores:  
Reading Grade 8



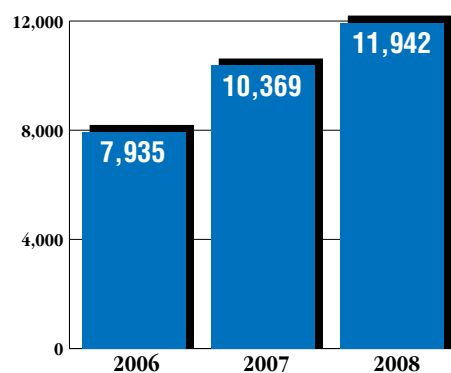
NAEP Average Scale Scores:  
Mathematics Grade 4



NAEP Average Scale Scores:  
Mathematics Grade 8



## Industry Certifications



During 2008, 45 percent of students completing a CTE program graduated with an Advanced Studies Diploma.

Seven innovative Governor's Career and Technical Academies align instruction in science, technology, engineering and mathematics with postsecondary expectations and 21st-century local and state work force needs.

## A Foundation for Future Success

The successes enjoyed by Virginia's public schools under the SOL program reflect the sustained commitment of parents, educators and policymakers to accountability, academic rigor and enhanced educational opportunities for all children.

By challenging every student every day, from preschool through high school, Virginia public schools are preparing students — and the commonwealth — for success in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

*"Education is the key to opportunity, and Virginia's public schools are preparing young people for success in the global economy."*

*Mark E. Emblidge  
President, Board of Education*